The Myrtle.

"INSTEAD OF THE BRIER SHALL COME UP THE MYRTLE TREE." ISA. LV. 13

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Mud Pies.

TELL me, little housewives,
Playing in the sun,
How many minutes
Till the cooking's done

Johnny builds the oven,
Jenny rolls the crust,
Katy buys the flour
All of golden dust

Pat it here, and pat it there;
What a dainty size!
Bake it on a shingle,
Nice mud pies!

Don't you hear the bluebird
High up in the air?
Good morning little ones,
Are you busy there?

Pretty Mister squirrel
Bounces down the rail,
Takes a seat and watches,
Curls his bushy tail.

Twirl it so and mark it so
(Looking wondrous wise)
All the plums are pebbles, —
Rich mud pies!

Arms that never weary
Toiling dimple deep,
Shut the oven door, now,
And soon we'll take a peep.

Wish we had a shower, —
Think we need it so, —
That would make the roadside
Such a heap of dough!

Turn them in and turn them out;
How the morning flies;
Ring the bell for dinner, —
Hot mud pies!

"OH! look not on the earth,
True happiness to find;
Thy search will be in vain,
For hidden is the mine."

For the Myrtle.

The Birthday Party.

PART I.

ONCE when Christmas trees were not as common as they now are, I had one for my birthday party, although instead of being in December it was on the last of January. But it was not such a tree as most people would imagine, for my mother, being anxious to give employment to an old gentleman named Vai, who had become reduced in circumstances, asked him to make an artificial fir-tree of wood, to appear as like nature as was possible. When it came home how we laughed! for it was not like a tree at all. It was nothing but a pole, with holes bored all the way up, through which long pegs beautifully polished were passed, to hang things upon, and the stand was so small that at the least touch the whole affair would rock to and fro. This fault, however, my father remedied by nailing it to a large box, and my mother covered the pegs with green paper fringe, but it did not look much like a tree, even then!

I had the privilege of purchasing the decorations. These were tiny Dutch dolls, to which I fastened gilt wings, and wands with gilt stars at the tips, which gave them a very fairly-like appearance. There were desks, baskets, drums, trumpets, swords, dolls' cradles, chests of drawers, and pewter kitchen utensils; and there were fancy bags and boxes made by myself, and filled

with sweets. I also made thimble cases out of walnut shells, joined with bright-colored ribbons and lined with velvet to match. The invitations were written on tiny sheets of note paper, with flowers painted at each corner, and the envelopes had fancy edges.

I was very troublesome that day, asking immediately after breakfast "how soon would it be four o'clock?" and wishing it were that time already; teasing to be dressed, and afterwards crumpling and tearing my white frock by rushing up and down stairs, and in and out of every door, examining and re-examining my presents of the morning, and those that continued to arrive, and squeezing the old cat in my excitement until she drew three ugly red lines across my face in her own defence. Then I played with my coral necklace until the threads broke, and the beads were scattered; however, threading them anew kept me occupied for some time, and then I flattened my nose against a window pane, and strained my eyes watching for the coming of Annie, Lizzie and Martha Holland, who were expected to be amongst the first arrivals.

They soon appeared. Annie, with her gipsy style of beauty, full of excitement, Lizzie with a string of beads, and an imitation gold jewelled locket that she had borrowed from one of her dolls, for Lizzie delighted in odds and ends of finery, no matter how old or of what material they might be. Her large brown eyes glowed and her rosy lips parted with smiles. Her first words were "How nice it will be at tea time!" Martha was a rosy, black-eyed little trot, who wishing to appear older than she was, thought it the correct thing to sit up very stiffly, and speak only in whispers. Then came an old lady whom I only knew as "The Dowager" who brought me a pretty little gold pencil-case, with an amethyst top, and a quantity of sweet oranges, which she wanted to see me eat then and there. She made me a long speech about this being my birthday, when I ought to resolve never to do a naughty thing all the rest of my life, never be disobedient, or pert, or self-willed, or careless, or untidy, or fidgetty, and I recollect that this seemed quite to dampen my cheerfulness, and to make me think less gratefully of the pencil-case and oranges. I thought that it was too much like telling me I had all these faults, and before my little friends, too!

It was not long before quite a number of girls and boys had arrived, and we were playing "At my Lady's Toilet." There were James, Clorinda, Minnie and John Soldi, who were full of care for the younger children, with the exception of John! for he was more inclined to play practical jokes on them, in which he was joined by Louis Casella, the brother of Cæsarina, and Octavia, who were very quiet and retiring, and being better acquainted with Clorinda and Minnie than they were with Annie, talked more with them. I saw that Annie did not quite like this, so lest she should think that I was inclined to neglect her I kept with her nearly the whole time, and we were naughty enough to whisper together, and make fun of some of the little guests. There was one — a little foreigner named Angelina Ortelli—who came in a black silk dress that nearly reached the floor, and carried a silk reticule on one arm; her hair net was brought down so low over her forehead as to give her the appearance of wearing a smoking cap.

"Oh, do look at that child!" said Annie; "isn't she like a little old maid, with her bag on her arm? I wonder that she did not bring a parrot or a monkey with her. Do let us go near her and have some fun."

We went, and when Annie laughed behind her pocket handkerchief, I felt duty bound to do the same, at which poor Angelina looked more astonished than vexed; indeed, it was not long ere she commenced laughing too, and this good-nature on her part quite disarmed us, and made us ashamed of having tried to tease her, so we emptied some papers of candies into her hands, with which she was very much pleased. We noticed that she hastened to offer some to her mother, a lady with fine dark eyes and hair, who spoke broken English, and was relating to my mother some anecdote about a barrel of oysters that had been sent her, but instead of *oysters*, she said *oystriches*, which made us laugh so that we had to leave the room and stand outside the door to talk a great deal of nonsense about having "oystriches" for supper, and oyster feathers in our new hats.

When we re-entered the room, we found every one engaged in forfeits, except one little girl, a stranger to us, who being on a visit to some friends of ours had come with them to the party. This child was very plain-looking, and was dressed up so fine that she was afraid to join in any of our games for fear of tearing her fine clothes. She sat by herself, looking at the other children with an envious sneer.

"Let us have some fun," whispered Annie. So sitting down by my side, and pretending not to observe that this little girl was anywhere near, Annie asked as seriously as she could, "Did you see that beautiful young lady who came with the Cheneys? Had not she a splendid dress on? it must have cost hundreds of pounds, and her pearl necklace must have cost thousands of pounds, and I dare say she had a Court hair-dresser to do up those lovely curls."

"Well, Annie," said I, "you may admire her dress, but I admire her beautiful face the most, and her tiny hands and feet; her feet are nearly as small as my dolls', so that you can hardly see them when she walks, and she has such a pretty little hopping kind of walk! and when she tosses her curls over her shoulder she does it so graecfully, and that sweet little cough she gives, too!"

"I wonder where she is!" asked Annie.

At this moment the vain girl, who had taken for granted that we had seriously meant what we said in her praise, arose from her seat and slowly walked before us, tossing her curls over her shoulder and coughing affectedly, whilst she rearranged some of the trimmings of her frock. This was too ridiculous, and we could not keep from a hearty laugh, conscious though we were that our conduct had not been polite or Christian. At this, comprehending that we were only jesting at her expense, the mortified child burst into tears, and said that she wanted to go away, and my mother coming up to ask what was the matter, I turned red with shame.

"She's laughing at me, and I am not enjoying myself. They said that I should like it, and I don't. There's no Christmas tree, and there are no presents for me, and I can't play in this dress for fear aunt should scold me for spoiling it."

"Oh, dear me!" exclaimed my mother, "this is very sad. I am very much displeased with my little daughter for laughing at you instead of trying to make you happy when you came here to enjoy yourself. But there *is* a Christmas tree, and after tea the presents will be distributed, and you had better try and be happy in seeing the others so merry, if you are not able to be so yourself; or if Mrs. Cheney approved I could put you on a white frock that would fit you, so that you could join in the games."

"Is it a fashionable dress, ma'am?"

"No, my dear; a very plain, but good, clean, nice-loooking frock."

"Then I think, ma'am, I would rather keep on my pink dress."

"As you please, my dear," and then my mother moved away.

But about the tea and the Christmas tree I shall have to tell another time.

Clelia Lega Weeks.

In School Days.

STILL sits the schoolhouse by the road,
A ragged beggar sunning;
Around it still the sumachs grow,
And blackberry vines are running.

Within, the master's desk is seen,
Deep scarred by raps official;
The warping floor, the battered seats,
The jacknife's carved initial;

The charcoal frescoes on its walls,
Its door's worn sill, betraying
The feet that, creeping slow to school,
Went storming out to playing!

Long years ago a winter's sun,
Shone over it at setting;
Lit up its western window panes,
And low eaves' icy fretting,

It touched the tangled golden curls,
And brown eyes full of grieving,
Of one who still her steps delayed
When all the school were leaving.

For near her stood the little boy
Her childish favor singled,
His cap pulled low upon a face
Where pride and shame were mingled.

Pushing with restless feet the snow
To right and left he lingered,
As restlessly her tiny hands
The blue-checked apron fingered.

He saw her lift her eyes; he felt
The soft hand's light caressing,
And heard the trembling of her voice,
As if a fault confessing.

"I'm sorry that I spelt the word;
I hate to go above you,
Because"—the brown eyes lower fell—
"Because, you see, I love you!"

Still memory to a gray-haired man
That sweet child-face is showing,
Dear girl! the grasses on her grave
Have forty years been growing!

He lives to learn in life's hard school,
How few who pass above him
Lament their triumph and his loss,
Like her—because they love him.

John G. Whittier.

THE growth toward the infinite in goodness must lead men into sympathy with all classes, and to have true sympathy one must enter fully into the life of individuals of all conditions.

For the Myrtle.

Mother and Baby.

REACH up his little hands,
That is the way to rise!
Here to help him his mother stands
And smiles in his laughing eyes.

Baby's too weak and small
Yet to walk alone
He will have full many a fall
Till he is stronger grown.

Mother must help him on;
Strengthen his little feet;
By and by when the years are gone
Will her reward be sweet.

When she is feeble and old
And he a man with men,
Mother will be the one to hold
Her hands to the baby then.

H. A. B.

For the Myrtle.

Coasting.

WHEN Albert was a little boy he was very fond of coasting. He had a nice sled which was large enough for two to ride on side by side.

This sled he made himself, for he was not only fond of play, but he liked to work. He learned to use tools when very young and made many useful things for his mother and sisters.

His father was so well-pleased with Albert's sled that he got the blacksmith to put on steel runners. This made it a very fine sled for coasting. He often took his sister Abbie to ride. She was older and larger than Albert, but on the "iron-shod sled" she was a very light burden for him to draw.

Abbie had often watched her brother coasting down the old orchard, guiding his sled among the apple trees and down by the willows, over the ice-bound brook, and finally out through the bars to the very road in front of the house.

She wondered if she could learn just how to avoid the trees and get through the bars with the sled going so fast. At any rate, she would try if Albert would show her. So putting on her hood, cloak and mittens, off she scampered with him one morning. They went to a part of the orchard that was not very steep for the first trial.

When they had reached the top of the hill, Albert said,

"Now, Abbie, you may set on the left side and I will set on the right, and you must put your foot out at the side of the sled, so. Now if the sled runs too far *my* way you must touch your heel lightly to the snow and that will turn the sled *your* way."

"I am afraid it will hurt my foot," said Abbie.

"Oh, nonsense," said Albert. "Keep your ankle and knee stiff and just a light touch of your heel will be enough to turn it. If you should

hold your foot down too long it might turn the sled round and tip us over."

"Now do you understand what I mean?"

"Oh, yes," said Abbie. "It is just like driving a horse; pull him the way you want him to go, only use your heels instead of your hands."

"Yes, that is it. Here we go," said he, taking his heel out of the snow, where he had kept it to hold the sled while Abbie was getting ready.

They went down quite slowly, Albert avoiding a tree with a touch of his foot, and stopped in front of the willows.

"Oh, that was grand!" said Abbie, with sparkling eyes.

Albert smiled but did not tell her that she had done nothing to make the ride a success.

Up they went again to a steeper part of the

orchard, and came down more swiftly, Albert avoiding all the trees until they neared the willows, when he shouted, "Steer the sled, Abbie." She touched her heel several times, but so lightly that it did not keep them from going plump into the willows.

"Oh dear!" said Abbie, "I tried to steer it."

"Well, never mind!" said her brother, "we'll try it again. It is practice that makes perfect. So down they went again, Abbie doing her part at the right time among the trees, but when they reached the bars, the sled came up against the post on Albert's side and they both rolled to the ground.

"Did it hurt you?" said Albert, jumping up again.

"No," said Abbie doubtfully, rubbing her head.

"Do you want to try again?"

"Yes, *I do!* I know I can do better next time," said Abbie, resolutely, starting for the top again.

And so she did, and they made several successful rides from the steepest part of the orchard before she gave it up.

That morning's lesson taught her one thing which she always remembered; that to be successful in anything one must be active and do just the right thing at the right time. If she found an obstacle in her way she always thought how she run against that post, and knew that she did not understand her work well enough to do the right thing at the right time; so she was ready to study it more thoroughly and try again.

Now that is the way for all little girls and boys to do. Always learn just how to do a thing right. Don't be contented to do the first part right, and then spoil the whole by doing the last part wrong. For when a thing is once learned it is *always* yours. *C. G. H.*

If your income is five dollars a day, spend but four. If it is one dollar, spend eighty cents. If it is but ten cents, spend nine. If it is three potatoes, save one for seed. Thus you will gradually acquire something; while if you spend and consume as you go, you will never get ahead one inch in your life, but every sunset will look on you poorer than at sunrise, because you will have used unprofitably one day more of your strength and alloted term of life.

Your Mission.

If you cannot on the ocean
Sail among the swiftest fleet,
Rocking on the highest billows,
Laughing at the storms you meet:
You can stand among the sailors,
Anchored yet within the bay,
You can lend a hand to help them,
As they launch their boats away.

If you are too weak to journey
Up the mountain, steep and high,
You can stand within the valley
While the multitudes go by;
You can chant in happy measure,
As they slowly pass along,
Though they may forget the singer,
They will not forget the song.

If you have not gold and silver
Ever ready to command;
If you cannot towards the needy
Reach an ever open hand;
You can visit the afflicted,
O'er the erring you can weep,
You can be a true disciple,
Sitting at the Saviour's feet.

If you cannot in the conflict
Prove yourself a soldier true;
If where fire and smoke are thickest,
There's no work for you to do;
When the battle field is silent,
You can go with careful tread,
You can bear away the wounded,
You can cover up the dead.

Do not, then, stand idly waiting
For some greater work to do!
Fortune is a lazy goddess,
She will never come to you.
Go and toil in any vineyard,
Do not fear to do or dare,
If you want a field of labor,
You can find it *anywhere.*

—*S. S. Times*

March Winds.

Listen, Kitty, my darling!
Here by the fireside bright,
Do you know what the winds are saying,
Abroad in the gusty night;
Moaning under the windows,
Like the voice of a child that grieves,
Making the maples shiver,
And creak at the cottage eaves?

Listen, Kitty, my darling!
The winds are singing a song
Of the spring that is softly stealing
From summer lands along;
The snow-drops smile as they hear it—
A smile for the spring's sweet sake;
And the shy little violets whisper:
"We hear; we are broad awake!"

No matter, Kitty, my darling!
Though the March winds drearily blow,
I am sure that the daisies are stirring,
Down under the sheltering snow.
In spite of the blustering weather,
The crocus is budding again;
And the daffodils whisper together,
And wait for the April rain.

Our Sunday Schools.

MASSACHUSETTS.

——The school at Wakefield deserves to set the fashion in the way of adorning the walls of its session-room. All the pictures are procured by contribution from the classes, and so every few weeks or months a presentation is made to the school from some class which has obtained funds enough for the purchase of some pretty chromo or engraving on which the hearts of the pupils are set. In this way have been received the fine engravings of "Christ blessing Little Children," and "The Lesson of the Lilies," and several other fine pictures. The other day we met the pastor in search of that beautiful chromo "Easter Morning"—a cross wreathed with flowers—as an Easter gift from his Bible class to the school. Consider how easily a Sunday School room can thus be made to grow in beauty, year after year, and what interest and enjoyment will cluster around each picture, and then see if the fashion is not worth the following!

The Sunday School of the Second Parish in Lynn has also an excellent fashion of its own in regard to the purchase of library books. Several of the classes contribute weekly for books and when a sufficient sum is received the class selects the book it will have. This is first read by all the members, and then given to the school. Some of the classes purchase in this way a book a month, always the freshest and best in the market; and the library grows accordingly. Will not many other schools take these good hints to heart?

MAINE.

——The dedication of the new church in Hiram is postponed until May 1st. The Sunday School of whose needs we recently spoke has had a gift of one hundred and twenty-five volumes for its library, from the School Street Sunday School, Boston.

——The Sunday School at Biddeford has just given a literary entertainment, profitable not only in enjoyment, but in its return of money. Among the selections rendered was a short and pleasing drama entitled "Down by the Sea."

——The students of Westbrook Seminary publish an excellent little paper at the close of each term. It is called "The Seminary Student."

VERMONT.

——Rev. J. T. Powers reports from Ludlow the best of intelligence. All departments of the church work, he says, are active and prosperous,—the congregations, the conference, and not least the Sunday School and Bible classes. The secret of the one, we suspect, is in the other. "Active" and "prosperous" usually go together.

NEW JERSEY.

——A new church is being built at Irvington, the Sunday School room in which will be ready for occupation by the middle of April. It will be when completed the finest church of the place.

INDIANA.

——Rev. M. Crosley, of Munice, writes the *Leader* a cheering letter in regard to the *Missionary Boxes*. If *every* pastor would follow his example and make the yearly or semi-yearly pastoral call a time to open the *Box*, what an increase of pennies there would be!

"I am now collecting for January. I go around in person twice a year to every family that has a box. I open each box myself. The plan has now become a fixture. Indeed I do not see how I could carry on my pastoral work without the boxes. They are a wonderful help in my parish work. By the aid of the boxes I can arrange to visit all around at least twice a year. It helps to systematize my duties outside the pulpit. And then, above all, these boxes are wonderful educators. They train my people to take an interest in denominational movements and work. This interest in our denominational work grows on them, and they are not aware of the fact that the boxes have so great an influence. Let others do as they may I shall hold on to the boxes, and use them, and consider them my right hand supporter in all my parish work. Send me more boxes"

Try the example, pastors. Or if the pastor cannot, try it with your class, teachers of Sunday Schools.

KANSAS.

——A series of lectures has been given in the new church at Lawrence, for the benefit of the Sunday School; the closing one being given Feb. 29th, by Rev. W. C. Brooks, on the subject "Mystery." The lectures are all highly spoken of and have yielded the school a return of nearly two hundred dollars.

Bad Company.

Nothing is worse for children and youth than bad company. "Evil communications corrupt good manners." So the best book tells us. Some children get caught in bad company when they are not aware of it beforehand. Here is a good illustration of their condition given by Rev. Mr. Hervey, pastor of the Universalist church in Peabody. He is talking to the children of his Sabbath School:—"Some young people get fettered sometimes. In the Brazillian forests the hunters catch the monkeys in this way. They have some very small boots made and covered inside with pitch. These they carry into the woods, and then in full sight of the monkeys, who are watching them from the tree-tops, they pull off and on their own boots several times. Then they go away, leaving the little boots behind. Down come the monkeys and pull them on in imitation of the hunters. Then the hunters rush upon them and catch the silly creatures — for they can't climb with boots on, and they can't shake the boots off. About the worst 'tight boots' that young people can get trapped with, is bad company."

The Lost Found.

We have read about lost children, — those who had strayed away from their homes, leaving sorrowing and sad ones in these homes. How diligently they have been sought! Neighbors and friends have gone out in every direction to find the wanderers and bring them back to the afflicted families again. And when they have been found, what rejoicings were there in the homes to which they belonged!

There are many lost ones in this world. Jesus came to find them, and to bring them home. "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost." There is joy in heaven among the angels over every one that is found. There will be joy in the highest when all the wanderers are brought home.

What to do on the Sabbath.

Go to meeting on the Sabbath, if you can. Go to the Sabbath School as a teacher or as a pupil. Go to your Bible, if you can, wherever you may be. Go to your God in humble thanksgiving and prayer. Go to the Saviour and hear his words, and receive his instructions and learn to be like him. All this is rightful employment for us on the Sabbath day.

Life of the Saviour.

LESSON LXXX

THE UNJUST STEWARD.

"Be ye wise as serpents and harmless as doves."

SCRIPTURE,—Luke xvi. 1–14.

Question. — With what parable does Jesus continue to teach the disciples?

Answer. — Luke xvi. 1.

Q. — Of what had this steward been guilty?

A. — Luke xvi. 1.

Q. — What did his lord order him to do?

A. — Luke xvi. 2.

NOTE. To give an account was to exhibit a statement of his receipts and expenditures.

Q. — Before rendering the account, what did the steward attempt to determine?

A. — Luke xvi. 3.

Q. — What could he not do for a living?

A. — Luke xvi. 3.

Q. — What was he ashamed to do?

A. — Luke xvi. 3.

Q. — In what way did he provide for his support?

A. — Luke xvi, 4, 5.

Q. — How much did he deduct from the indebtedness of the first whom he called?

A. — Luke xvi. 6.

NOTE. The measure of oil here mentioned contained about seven and one half gallons.

Q. — How much did he deduct from the indebtedness of another?

A. — Luke xvi. 7.

NOTE. The measure here mentioned contained something more than fourteen bushels. The reasoning of the steward seems to have been, that if he collected all these men were owing him, his lord would take it to repay himself for the prodigality of the steward, and he would be left with nothing; but that if he gave generously to these debtors, they would be generous to him in the time of his need.

Q. — When the steward carried in his account and his Lord saw what he had done, what did his lord do?

A. — Luke xvi. 8.

Q. — What advice, drawn from this parable, did Jesus give his disciples?

A. — Luke xvi. 9.

NOTE. Great changes were to occur in the passing away of the old institutions of religion and the establishment of the new. And Jesus had taught his disciples not to trust in earthly riches, but by feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the sick, and loving fellow-men as themselves, to enter into the kingdom of heaven. All these acts of benevolence receive the favor of God. And he epeats the lesson in this parable.

Q. — What was impossible for men?

A. — Luke xvi. 13.

Q. — What did the covetous Pharisees do?

A. — Luke xvi. 14.

Hidden Seed

Enigma.

1. A title of Jesus.
2. The tenth judge of Israel.
3. The third plague of Egypt.
4. A female merchant mentioned in the New Testament.
5. The son and successor of Saul.
6. The father of Moses.
7. A town of Lycia where Paul embarked for Rome.
8. The ancient name of Bethel.
9. The second high priest of Israel.
10. An animal unclean to the Jews.
11. Fourth son of Aaron
12. A noted Christian of Corinth.

Little Sower.

Answers.

MARCH 23. Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth.

THE MYRTLE

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